

# Verbal Practice Section 1: Easy Difficult

20 Questions  
Time: 30 Minutes

For questions 1–6, select one entry for each blank from the corresponding column of choices. Fill in the blank in the way that best completes the text.

1. A dry-farmed tomato raised in low-nitrogen soil will often have the nutrient value of a much larger conventionally grown tomato, and its flavor may be similarly \_\_\_\_\_.

delicious
healthful
scanty
concentrated
shrunk

2. Most viewers of today's reality television underestimate the degree of \_\_\_\_\_ with which the seemingly artless narrative of each episode is assembled: oftentimes, actors interviewed on camera are asked to repeat their story half a dozen times before producers are satisfied.

dramaturgy
opportunism
fallacy
contrivance
histrionics

3. Many (i) \_\_\_\_\_ have commented that football reflects an industrial perspective because the game time is inflexibly determined by the clock, whereas baseball stems from an agrarian one, in which, the passage of time is more (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ and determined by events.

Blank (i)   Blank (ii)

pundits	amorphous
amateurs	pacific
parvenus	asymmetrical

4. Ernest Hemingway, the novelist and proponent of traditional masculine virtues that were already considered (i) \_\_\_\_\_ by his more progressive peers, eventually lost currency with the general public; although his earlier literary works remained popular, his continuing adherence to that code drove him to disdain society, which, in turn, (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ him.

Blank (i)      Blank (ii)

effeminate	shunned
anachronistic	eulogized
sardonic	murdered

5. While a (i) \_\_\_\_\_, the smallest amount that can exist independently, of water could be said to be a single molecule, a (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ of dust could be made up of pollen, hair, human skin cells, minerals from soil, or even burnt meteor particles. Thus, one definition of dust is “solid particles with a diameter of less than 500 micrometers” — a (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ definition that is based only on size and state of matter rather than on structure.

Blank (i)    Blank (ii)    Blank (iii)

plethora	trove	precise
parameter	covey	loose
quantum	motte	deleterious

6. From the battle’s opening (i) \_\_\_\_\_ to its (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ conclusion, the forces of destruction razed a path through the city, ultimately leaving behind a (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ stillness where there once had been streets and squares bustling with life.

Blank (i)      Blank (ii)    Blank (iii)

denouement	sanguinary	brusque
salvo	celebrated	capitulatory
philippic	blithe	disquieting

**For each of questions 7–10, select one answer choice unless otherwise instructed.**

It is no revelation that people prefer immediate rewards. What is less well known is that people are willing to renounce a significant portion of a given reward in order to expedite delivery. This phenomenon is known as “discounting,” because the value of a delayed reward is discounted, or reduced, in the mind of the receiver. Discounting helps explain the

5 straightforward “time value of money” (a dollar now is worth more than a dollar later), but its manifestations can be far more dramatic.

Behavioral economists have identified extreme discounting in experiments in which subjects were offered either a dollar immediately or three dollars the next day. Individuals who consistently choose significantly smaller rewards for their immediacy are described as “present-biased.” Present-bias may seem innocuous, but it has serious ramifications. In another experiment,

young children were given a marshmallow, then told that if they could wait a few minutes to eat it, they would receive a second one. Those unable to endure the delay suffered from more behavioral problems in adolescence and scored markedly lower on standardized tests than the children who were able to wait and thereby earn another treat. Traits such

as indolence and apathy may indeed be manifestations of present-bias; material success is predicated on one's ability to recognize hedonistic impulses, understand their consequences, and delay or suppress gratification.

What was once known as "exponential discounting" (because the length of the delay before a reward was given seemed to correlate directly with the size of the perceived discount) has been renamed "hyperbolic discounting," because the effects of time delay do not seem strictly linear. A study showed that people offered \$50 now or \$100 in a year were likely to choose the former. But when 20 people were offered either \$50 in 5 years or \$100 in 6 years (the same choice 5 years in the future), the vast majority chose the latter. This experiment reveals the difficulty of making effective financial decisions about one's future priorities, just as the

choice to procrastinate requires the unlikely supposition that one's future self will have a greater set of resources to accomplish the postponed task than one's present self.

7. The function of the second paragraph within the passage may be most appropriately characterized as

- (A) analyzing the psychological sources of the phenomenon introduced in the first paragraph
- (B) elaborating upon and qualifying the main proposition put forth in the first paragraph
- (C) providing an alternative point of view on the positions already established by the author
- (D) illustrating one aspect of the phenomenon named in the first paragraph and offering possible social implications
- (E) drawing general conclusions about specific examples presented earlier

8. The passage suggests which of the following about the traits of indolence and apathy?

- (A) They are predicated on one's material success.
- (B) They may be regarded as the effects of a tendency toward extreme discounting.
- (C) They may be manifested in present-bias.
- (D) They may seem innocuous, but they have serious ramifications.
- (E) They are the cause of one's ability to identify and suppress hedonistic impulses.

9. It can be inferred that the word *hyperbolic* in the phrase "hyperbolic discounting" signifies, in this context,

- (A) the nonlinearity in the consequences of various delays
- (B) the exaggeration of the effects of time delay
- (C) the direct correlation between a delay's duration and a perceived discount's magnitude
- (D) the exponential growth of the size of the discounting
- (E) the lack of certainty in one's perception of longer and shorter delays

10. According to the passage, which of the following is true of the children described in the passage who were able to wait to eat their first marshmallow?

- (A) They scored lower on standardized tests than children unable to wait.
- (B) They suffered more frequently from behavior problems as adolescents.
- (C) They each received a second marshmallow as part of the experiment.
- (D) They could be characterized as indolent or apathetic.
- (E) They can accurately be described as present-biased.

**Question 11 is based on the following reading passage.**

The female arkbird will lay eggs only when a suitable quantity of nesting material is available, and the climate is suitably moderate. This winter is the coldest on record, but somewhat counterintuitively, the temperature change has actually increased the amount of nesting material as trees and plants die, shedding twigs and leaves. However, although nesting material is abundant,\_\_\_\_\_.

11. Which of the following options for the blank above is best supported by the passage?

- (A) The female arkbird will likely migrate to avoid the cold.
- (B) Arkbird mortality rates increase as the weather becomes less moderate.
- (C) Female arkbirds prefer the type of nesting material produced in warmer weather.
- (D) An abundance of nesting material provides increased protection for arkbird eggs.
- (E) The female arkbird will not lay eggs this winter.

**For questions 12–15, select the two answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.**

12. Floodwaters had already breached the library's walls, but hopeful volunteers in hip boots worked tirelessly to \_\_\_\_\_ the damage.

- ☐ exacerbate
- ☐ ameliorate
- ☐ recant
- ☐ forfeit
- ☐ recount
- ☐ extenuate

13. Eleanor of Aquitaine, who married Henry II of England, was dead and forgotten for hundreds of years, until Katherine Hepburn \_\_\_\_\_ her in "The Lion in Winter," injecting her own vitality into the depiction of that queen.

- ☐ immortalized
- ☐ mocked
- ☐ resurrected
- ☐ glamorized
- ☐ immortalized
- ☐ parodied

14. However beneficent the intentions, if the civilian death toll continues to climb, ongoing contact with the local populace may well prove \_\_\_\_\_ to the aim of normalizing relations.

- ☐ asinine
- ☐ bedazzling
- ☐ unpropitious
- ☐ inimical

☐ calibrated ☐  
incongruous

15. The theme song from the film *Team America: World Police* is meant as a parody, sending up the \_\_\_\_\_ slogans and anthems that have recently become a disconcertingly ubiquitous aspect of American life.

☐ aggressive  
☐ punctilious  
☐ boosterish  
☐ jingoistic  
☐ pedantic ☐  
bloodthirsty

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**Question 16 is based on the following reading passage.**

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The chemicals division at Company M spent 4% of its 2008 budget on marketing. The consumer products division spent 35% of its 2008 budget on marketing, while the machinery division spent only 2% of its 2008 budget on marketing.

16. Which of the following conclusions is best justified by the data above?

- (A) The consumer products division spent more on marketing in 2008 than the chemicals and machinery divisions combined.
- (B) Consumers are more swayed by marketing than are the mostly corporate buyers of chemicals and machinery.
- (C) On average, all three divisions combined spent less than 35% of their 2008 budgets on marketing.
- (D) The company's overall spending on marketing is between 4% and 35%.
- (E) The chemicals division spent 100% more on marketing in 2008 than did the machinery division.

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**Questions 17–19 are based on the following reading passage.**

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Maps are essential décor for any social studies class, and though they are helpful tools in beginning to understand geography, maps are merely 2-D representations of a 3-D world and will always carry certain inherent inaccuracies. Because of their flatness and size restrictions, maps require manipulation, rendering them incapable of showing the actual shape of the earth and the continents, nations, and other features upon it. Though these might seem like necessary

5 concessions, the implications of such manipulations move beyond the blackboard and can have damaging effects; forcing students to see the world in 2-D each day has the attendant effect of teaching them to understand the world in two-dimensional terms.

Furthermore, maps present borders as fixed, unchanging entities, which is a misleading implication to present in a history course. Borders have been changing throughout the history of civilization, and the United States is a perfect example of a country with borders that have blurred and bled into one another for decades as states continued to form and join as recently as the 20th century.

17. The author's main idea is that

- (A ) maps are a necessary evil
- (B ) maps present borders as static
- (C ) 3-D representation of the world is impossible
- (D ) outdated information makes education less effective
- (E) graphic representation can encourage cognitive misconceptions.

18. Which of the following, if true, would most undermine part of the author's evidence?

- (A ) Some students exposed to maps grasp 3-D and dynamic concepts about the world.
- (B ) Most teachers rely very little on the maps displayed in their classrooms.
- (C ) Computer generated map displays increasingly in use in classrooms show changes in boundaries almost instantaneously.
- (D ) Maps from hundreds of years ago contain errors.
- (E) 2-D maps do not indicate topographical features effectively.

19. The author does which of the following in the passage

- (A ) employs circular logic
- (B ) cites a historical case
- (C ) uses physical description to support an accusation
- (D ) discusses a hierarchy of problems with maps
- (E) rebuts a commonly held view

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**Question 20 is based on the following reading passage.**

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In 1928, Sir Alexander Fleming, working at St. Mary's Hospital in London, observed that a bluish-green mold had contaminated a culture of *Staphylococcus*, and that the areas of the *Staphylococcus* bacteria nearest to the mold were being destroyed. Upon testing a pure culture of this mold, Fleming discovered that the mold killed many types of bacteria. He named the substance *penicillin* and published his results in 1929.

It was not, however, until over a decade later that a team of researchers from Oxford, aided by an American laboratory, were able to increase the growth rate of penicillin — by then recognized to be the strongest antibacterial agent known at that time — such that enough of it could be produced to treat Allied soldiers wounded on D-Day, in 1944.

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Consider each of the answer choices separately and indicate all that apply.

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20. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- ☐ Fleming did not fully appreciate the therapeutic value of penicillin.
- ☐ At some point prior to 1944, penicillin could not be grown fast enough.
- ☐ Since ancient times, antibacterial agents have been used to treat wounded soldiers.

# Answers to Verbal Practice Section 1

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1. **Concentrated.** “Similarly” tells you that the relatively small dry-farmed tomato has all the flavor of a conventionally grown large tomato, just as it has all the nutrients. You want a word that means something like “condensed.” Only *concentrated* works. *Shrunken* and even *scanty* might be attractive, but neither captures the idea that the tomato has a great deal packed into a small package.

2. **Contrivance.** This blank takes its clue from the phrase “seemingly artless.” As is often the case in GRE questions, the word *seemingly* should set you up to be thinking of an opposite to “artless,” which means “genuine, not artificial.” In this case, then, you want a word that denotes something deliberately constructed or fabricated: something *contrived*.

3. **Pundits, amorphous.** The clue for the first blank is “commanded” (*commandators* are professionals, not amateurs). The pivot word *whereas* means that the second blank opposes “inflexibly determined.” *Amorphous* fits this meaning.

4. **Anachronistic, shunned.** Following the clues, the first blank must reflect the opinion of “progressive peers” regarding that which is “traditional” (*progressive* indicates wanting to move forward — away from traditions). *Anachronistic* means “in the wrong time period.” The second blank must match *disdain* because of the expression *in turn*, which indicates reciprocating an action or “getting someone back” for something.

5. **Quantum, mote, loose.** A *quantum* is “the smallest amount that can exist independently.” A *mote* is a speck or small amount; the word is specifically associated with dust. In the third blank, since the definition is *based only on size and state of matter rather than on structure*, it is *loose*, rather than strict.

6. **Salvo, sanguinary, disquieting.** A *salvo* is a “simultaneous release of bombs,” and is often used metaphorically to mean the start of some kind of fight. Certainly, every clue in the sentence is negative, so you want to describe the battle’s conclusion in a negative way — only *sanguinary* matches. Finally, a “stillness where there once had been streets and squares bustling with life” is a bit disturbing or *disquieting*.

7. **(D).** The first paragraph introduces the phenomenon of *discounting*: the reduction in the perceived value of a delayed reward. You are told that discounting can account for “straightforward” effects such as the time value of money, but “more dramatic” manifestations are also hinted at. Some of these dramatic manifestations of “extreme discounting” are described in the second paragraph. You learn about “present-bias” in two experiments (one in which \$1 now is preferred to \$3 tomorrow, and another in which children struggle to resist marshmallows). The consequences of the marshmallow experiment are stated and summarized upon in a larger social context (how present-bias may prevent material success). Thus, the second paragraph elaborates upon a particular, extreme version of the phenomenon introduced in the first paragraph. It also draws out a few larger implications. Regarding (A), the second paragraph provides nothing to explain where discounting comes from psychologically. You cannot assume that children are the “psychological sources” or that discounting originates in childhood. Regarding (B), the first paragraph does not really introduce a “proposition” per se, which would be a claim of some sort. Rather, the first paragraph simply defines a phenomenon. Even if you said that this definition is a proposition, the second paragraph does not “qualify” (limit) it in any way. As for choice (C), the author has staked out no position in the first paragraph; he or she has only described a phenomenon. The second paragraph does not take an alternative point of view, either. As for (E), there are no true “specific examples” introduced in the first paragraph for the second paragraph to draw conclusions

from .

8. **(B)** . Since you learn from the passage, “Traits such as indolence and apathy may indeed be manifestations of present-bias,” you are looking for a choice that says more or less the same thing. Choice (A) mixes up words from the text (*predicated, material success*), but definitely does not match the meaning of the passage. The passage says that material success is predicated on the “ability to recognize hedonistic impulses,” not that indolence and apathy are predicated on material success. In fact, the passage suggests that indolence and apathy have something to do with a *lack* of material success. Choice (B) is correct but is in disguise. You are looking for *manifestations of present-bias*, but you have here “regarded as the effects of a tendency toward extreme discounting.” The key is that at the beginning of the second paragraph, you have essentially defined “present-bias” in terms of “extreme discounting.” That is, present-bias is really nothing more than a tendency toward extreme discounting. This disguise makes choice (B) tricky. Regarding choice (C), be careful with language! Saying that these traits “are manifested IN present-bias” means exactly the reverse of “are manifestations OF present-bias.” In the former, the traits are somehow hidden, but they show up IN or THROUGH something on the surface called present-bias. What you are looking for, however, is this: present-bias is the hidden thing. The traits of indolence and apathy are manifestations (demonstrations) of that hidden thing. Choice (D), like choice (A), mixes up words from the text. Present-bias — not indolence and apathy — is what “may seem innocuous,” but have “serious ramifications.” Choice (E) also grabs language from the text but uses it in a mixed-up way. The language “traits such as indolence and apathy” shows up in the same sentence as the *ability to recognize hedonistic impulses... and delay or suppress gratification*, but those two phrases are not connected in an “X causes Y” way. If anything, you could infer that these traits and this ability run counter to each other: if you have the latter, you probably won’t have the former.

9. **(A)** . In this Inference question, you must deduce something about the meaning of a particular jargon word, *hyperbolic*, as used in the phrase “hyperbolic discounting.” Do not try to figure out its meaning in your head; wrong answer choices have been devised to play off of your possible knowledge of the word *hyperbolic*. Rather, go to the text. You are told that “*exponential discounting*... *has been renamed ‘hyperbolic discounting,’ because the effects of time delay do not seem strictly linear.*” Focus on this last part. The meaning of “hyperbolic” must have to do with this idea, that *the effects of time delay do not seem strictly linear*. Only (A) works. *Nonlinearity* means the quality of not being linear. *Consequences* is a synonym for effects. Translated slightly, this is what you are looking for. Be careful of choice (B) — the use of the word *hyperbole* in everyday speech to mean “exaggeration” could mislead you here.

10. **(C)** . This Specific Detail question requires you to find something absolutely true according to the passage. In this case, you want to know what you can restate about the children who were able to wait. Careful: since there are two groups of children, an easy way for the test to construct a wrong answer is to state something true about the *other* group of children. That is, a comparison may be reversed. Incorrect choices (A), (B), (D), and (E) describe the children who *didn’t* wait.

11. **(E)** . When the question stem asks for the option for the blank *best supported by the passage*, it is asking for a *conclusion* that is the logical synthesis of the premises in the argument. The argument gives two requirements for egg laying: there must be nesting material, and the climate must be moderate. While *moderate* hasn’t been specifically defined, it’s safe to say that *the coldest winter on record* is the opposite of *moderate*. Therefore, the bird will not lay eggs. The fact that the nesting material requirement has been filled — even above and beyond what is required — doesn’t fix the problem. Choices (A), (B), (C), and (D) offer statements for which you do not have enough information to evaluate. Note that in choice (B), “mortality rates” are not the same thing as laying eggs or not laying eggs.

12. **A** *ameliorate, extenuate*. You know that floodwaters had already entered the library, but the “hopeful” volunteers are working anyway — they hope to *limp* it the damage. *Ameliorate* and *extenuate* both have the sense of making something better without completely solving it. Note that *exacerbate* means the opposite (to make worse), and *recant*



and *forfeit* are negative words that just don't fit here (you could *recant* your former statements and *forfeit* an athletic competition, for instance).

13. **R esurrected, im m ortalized.** The answers must oppose "dead and forgotten." While *glamorized* might be tempting, you cannot justify it with clues from the sentence (*vitality* is certainly not enough to be *glamorous*).

*Mocked* and *parodied* is an incorrect pair — the sentence gives no indication that Eleanor is being made fun of. Do not weave stories or insert your own ideas. Note that *resurrected* and *immortalized* are not synonyms, but both certainly oppose the clue "dead and forgotten."

14. **U npropitious, inim ical.** The sentence tells you that if the death toll continues to climb, contact with the local populace— despite being intended for helpful (*beneficent*) purposes— may prove the opposite. You are looking for words that mean something like harmful. *Unpropitious* and *inimical* both mean adverse or harmful, and are just the words you are looking for. *Incongruous* means not fitting. While this *could* be a match for the blank, meaning-wise — since contact with the locals may not fit with the aim of normalizing relations — *incongruous* is used with "with" rather than "to," and it lacks a match among the answer choices.

15. **B oosterish, jingoistic.** You are asked to describe "slogans and anthems" that are then described as "disconcertingly ubiquitous." While *aggressive* and *bloodthirsty* are a near-pair, they are far too strong to describe slogans and anthems. *Punctilious* and *pedantic* are also a near-pair, but refer to arrogance related to rule-following or learning, which aren't relevant here. *Boosterish* and *jingoistic*, both implying an uncritical support of something (specifically one's country, in the case of *jingoistic*) are much better.

16. **(C ).** When a logic problem gives you a bunch of numbers, it is very likely that the problem will then try to trick you into assigning *reasons* for those numbers. It is important to stick only to the facts you were given so that you do not select an unsupported conclusion. Regarding (A ), the consumer products division spent a higher *percentage* on marketing, but you don't know that it spent more actual dollars (maybe the consumer products division is much smaller than chemicals and machinery). (B ) should trip a red alert! You are absolutely not authorized to guess *why* the numbers worked out the way they did. You have absolutely no information that would justify this conclusion, or any conclusion about consumer behavior. (C ) is correct — on average, all three divisions spent less than 35% of their budgets on marketing. While you don't know how big the budgets were in actual dollars or anything about the sizes of the three budgets relative to one another, 35% of any number, averaged in with less than 35% of some other numbers, will certainly generate an average under 35%. Note that, since a conclusion you draw in a Logic Reading Comprehension question cannot introduce new assumptions, correct conclusions are often fairly obvious or are near-paraphrases of information you've already read in the passage. Regarding (D ), you don't know if the company has other divisions besides chemicals, machinery, and consumer products, so you cannot draw this conclusion. (E ) is wrong because the chemicals division may have spent a higher *percentage*, but you have no information about the actual number of dollars spent or the relative sizes of the two departments' marketing budgets.

17. **(E ).** The author's thrust is that 2-D representation warps students' perception; it pushes them to think of the world as flat and static rather than 3-D and dynamic. Choice (A ) is not the point and the author does not say maps are necessary or evil, which is too extreme. (B ) is a true detail from the passage but is less than the author's overall point. A gain, (C ) might be implied but the purpose of the passage is to discuss the effect of such tools. (D ) might be inferred from the second paragraph but ignores the main issue of the essay.

18. **(C ).** In the second paragraph, the static quality of maps is mentioned as a negative and choice (C ) eliminates that problem. As for choice (A ), "some" means at least one, not a majority — the example of what may just be a few exceptional students does not do much damage to the evidence or the point that, in general, maps cause students to think about the world in 2-D. The author's evidence involves the presence of maps in the classroom, so the amount of use (B ) is irrelevant. (D ) is also irrelevant, as the passage premises involve modern maps. (E ) is backwards; it

strengthens the evidence that maps improve 3-D comprehension.

19. **(B)**. In the second paragraph, the author uses the example of the 20th century United States to buttress his or her argument. (A) and (E) are outright falsehoods — there is no circular logic nor a rebuttal ... for that matter, there is no common only held view discussed. As for (C), the author does use physical description but not in support of an “accusation.” (D) is incorrect because the author listed problems but did not create a hierarchy.

20. **II only**. The passage tells you that Fleming discovered penicillin and that others developed it; you don't know anything about his feelings or predictions about his discovery. You do know that *it was not until a decade later that a team of researchers from Oxford, with the help of an American laboratory, were able to increase the growth rate of penicillin ... such that it could be produced in sufficient quantity to treat Allied soldiers wounded on D-Day, in 1944*. Thus, at some point prior to 1944, penicillin was being grown too slowly. Finally, while penicillin was used to treat Allied soldiers in 1944, you don't know that antibacterial agents were used “since ancient times.” A little bit of common sense should indicate that this was almost certainly *not* the case in the very earliest battles (ancient people didn't know about bacteria), but of course outside information is not needed to answer GRE Reading Comprehension questions — we can simply note that the passage covers only a very short period of time.